

Message Text

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61

ACTION EB-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 CAB-09 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 FAA-00 SAM-01

SS-20 NSC-07 L-03 PA-04 PRS-01 USIA-15 DRC-01 /124 W

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R 221413Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

SECSTATE WASHDC 9136

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 8468

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRN SY

SUBJECT: CIVAIR - SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES REEQUIPMENT

REF: BEIRUT 8261 (NOTAL

SUMMARY: SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES DECISION STILL DELAYED BUT
WITH INDICATIONS US AIRCRAFT STILL VERY MUCH IN PICTURE
DESPITE CONTINUED THREAT AIRBUS INDUSTRIE A-300B4. END SUMMARY

1. HIGHLY RELIABLE SOURCE (RIAD HANBALI, AVIATION-
ORIENTED CORRESPONDENT BEIRUT'S AL-HAWADESS), CLOSE TO
RCAA, RETURNED FROM DAMSCUS TODAY WITH INDICATIONS US
AIRCRAFT STILL VERY MUCH IN RUNNING VIS A VIS A-300B4.
SOURCE MET WITH RIFAAT ASSAD, BROTHER OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT
HAFEZ ASSAD, JULY 20. RIFAAT ASSAD STATED THAT IN
HIS VIEW, SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES WOULD ACQUIRE US WIDEBODIED
TRIJEETS. IN EARLIER MEETING TEN DAYS AGO WITH GENERAL MOHAMED AL-
KHOULI, SYRIAN CHIEF AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE AND MEMBER OF
SPECIAL AIRCRAFT SELECTION COMMITTEE, AL-KHOULI ALSO
STATED TO SOURCE THAT SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES
WOULD ACQUIRE US AIRCRAFT.

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2. WE NOT COMPLACENT SINCE WE ARE WELL AWARE AIRBUS INDUSTRIE A-300B-4 STILL VERY STRONG THREAT BUT AGRESSIVE MARKETING BY LOCKHEED-CALIFORNIA AND DOUBLAS AIRCRAFT COMPANY HERE FURTHER BUTTRESS RCAA'S BELIEF THAT US STILL HAS VERY GOOD CHANCE TO WIN THIS KEY ORDER.

COMMENT: SARG DELAY IN REACHING LONG-AWAITED DECISION ON WIDEBODIED AIRCRAFT PROBABLY PLOY TO WHIP-SAW MAXIMUM CONCESSIONS FROM COMPETING AIRCRAFT MANUFACTUERS WITH INDICATIONS HERE BOTH LOCKHEED-CALIFORNIAN AND DOUBLAS AIRCRAFT COMPANY HAVE APPRECIABLY IMPROVED CONCESSIONAL INDUCEMENTS AND GUARANTEES. OUR MAIN WORRY HOWEVER, IS AIRLINE CHAIRMAN GENERAL MOUKAYED'S ENCHANTMENT WITH AIRBUS INDUSTRIE A-300B-4, DESPITE OUR STRONG ARGUMENTS STRESSING UNPROVEN CAPABILITY THIS AIRCRAFT AND ITS NARRLOWLY SPECIALIZED SHORT-MEDIUM RANGE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH WOULD SHARPLY INHIBIT SYRIAN ARAB'S FLEXIBILITY IN MEETING MEDIUM/ LONG RANGE PRESENT AND FUTURE ROUTE REQUIREMENTS AND DILUTING IMAGE VIS A VIS OTHER ARAB CARRIERS WHO ARE ACQUIREING PROVEN AND MORE VERSATILE US WIDEBODIED AIRCRAFT. GODLEY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COMMERCIAL AIRCRAFT, AIRCRAFT SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BEIRUT08468
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740197-1076
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740730/aaaaazjm.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BEIRUT 8261 (NOTAL
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <19 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CIVAIR - SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES REEQUIPMENT
TAGS: ETRN, SY, SYRIAN ARAB AIRLINES
To: ABU DHABI STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005